

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 301

September 30, 1999, 5:12 p.m.
Page S-11715 Temp. Record

LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION/40-Percent Increase for Public Broadcasting

SUBJECT: Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . S. 1650. Specter motion to table the Reid amendment No. 1820.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 51-44

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1650, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide \$324.2 billion in new budget authority, which is \$22.531 billion more than provided in fiscal year (FY) 1999 and is \$911.0 million less than requested. This amount includes advance discretionary and mandatory appropriations and \$9.902 billion in spending from trust funds. Budget authority for fiscal year 2000 discretionary spending will total \$84.018 billion.

The Reid amendment would increase funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) by 40 percent (to \$475 million; last year's funding was \$340 million; the bill proposes a \$10-million increase to \$350 million).

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. After debate, Senator Specter moved to table the amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

In prior debates on the CPB many Republicans have complained, rightly, about the far-left political views that dominate on these "public" stations, and they have complained, rightly, about the elitist snobbery of much of the programming. Certainly some good programs are funded (as are many good programs on commercial and cable television), but why should average Americans be taxed to pay for programming to amuse rich, elitist socialists? Due to these twin problems of leftist bias and elitism, public funding for the CPB has often been problematic. This year an additional problem has surfaced. The inspector general of the CPB has found that 53 of the 591 taxpayer-supported public broadcasting stations have made their private donor lists available, by exchange or rent,

(See other side)

YEAS (51)			NAYS (44)			NOT VOTING (5)	
Republicans (49 or 98%)	Democrats (2 or 4%)		Republicans (1 or 2%)	Democrats (43 or 96%)		Republicans (5)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Cleland	Jeffords	Akaka	Kerrey	Chafee ⁻²	
Allard	Hutchinson	Feingold		Baucus	Kerry	DeWine ⁻²	
Ashcroft	Hutchison			Bayh	Kohl	Mack ⁻²	
Bennett	Inhofe			Biden	Landrieu	McCain ⁻²	
Bond	Kyl			Bingaman	Lautenberg	Thomas ⁻²	
Brownback	Lott			Boxer	Leahy		
Bunning	Lugar			Breaux	Levin		
Burns	McConnell			Bryan	Lieberman		
Campbell	Murkowski			Byrd	Lincoln		
Cochran	Nickles			Conrad	Mikulski		
Collins	Roberts			Daschle	Moynihan		
Coverdell	Roth			Dodd	Murray		
Craig	Santorum			Dorgan	Reed		
Crapo	Sessions			Durbin	Reid		
Domenici	Shelby			Edwards	Robb		
Enzi	Smith, Bob (I)			Feinstein	Rockefeller		
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon			Graham	Sarbanes		
Frist	Snowe			Harkin	Schumer		
Gorton	Specter			Hollings	Torricelli		
Gramm	Stevens			Inouye	Wellstone		
Grams	Thompson			Johnson	Wyden		
Grassley	Thurmond			Kennedy			
Gregg	Voinovich						
Hagel	Warner						
Hatch							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

to Democratic political organizations. No evidence has been found of Republican political organizations receiving such donor lists from public broadcasting stations. Though no political bias has been shown in any of the exchanges, it does raise suspicions that some of these public stations may have been acting as adjuncts of the Democratic Party. Given the circumstances, we think liberal Members who support public broadcasting should be happy that this bill has an increase in funding for the CPB of \$10 million. They certainly cannot expect us to seriously consider increasing its budget by 40 percent. We obviously support the motion to table.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The CPB is a national treasure. It has produced some of the finest programming in history, including the Ken Burns' series on the Civil War and on baseball. Unfortunately, it is gradually being corrupted by commercial influences. Congress has regularly attacked it, so it has looked to other sources for funds. One of the major sources that it has found is Corporate America, which has increasingly given money with strings attached. Supposedly commercial-free stations now regularly run "underwriting" spots by their program sponsors. Those spots sound an awful lot like 30 second commercials. There is even some evidence of public stations distorting their programming in order to protect their corporate sponsors from criticism. For instance, in one case a station never revealed during its news programming that one of its main sponsors was being subjected to a boycott. The latest problem that has been revealed is that public stations have been exchanging donor lists with and renting donor lists to political organizations. Their motive appears to be only to make money. Our Republican colleagues make much of the fact that Democratic party organizations have received lists but not Republican party organizations, but that is only half of the story. Other political organizations that are definitely on the right side of the political spectrum, such as the Heritage Foundation, have received public station donor lists. The result of this trend is that people will no longer be able to trust public radio and public television to be unbiased in their reporting. They will have to wonder whether stations are engaging in self-censorship in order to get corporate cash. To fix this problem we have offered the Reid amendment. It would increase CPB funding dramatically in order to eliminate public stations' need to grovel for money to stay in business. Our colleagues say that the recent revelations about some public stations renting their donor lists proves that we ought not to increase funding; we believe that those revelations increase the case for more public funding. The Reid amendment has been offered to strengthen the independence of public broadcasting stations. We strongly support this amendment.